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Subject: News from the Maryland School Mental Health

Alliance

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Maryland School Mental Health Alliance Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter

December 2005

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Maryland State Department
of Education Receives a
Federal Grant Focused on
Improving the Integration of
Mental Health Services

Welcome to the first edition of the Maryland School Mental Health Alliance (MSMHA) newsletter. The newsletter will provide you with the latest information on the implementation of Maryland's School Mental Integration grant. Stay informed by subscribing to the free MSMHA newsletter by emailing dkrizan@mhamd.org if you are interested.

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Links to MSMHA Partners

- Maryland State
 Department of
 Education
- Center for School
 Mental Heal Analysis

 and Action
- Johns Hopkins Center for Prevention and Early Intervention

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) was recently awarded an 18-month, \$299.000 School Mental



Health Integration grant from the United States
Department of Education. One of a limited number of
states to receive this award, Maryland's project will aim at
strengthening student's and families access to mental
health services in public schools.

Maryland's project will target five local school systems: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, St. Mary's and Washington counties. Three schools from each county's school system will be identified to participate in this project. Schools selected must have an active Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports Program (PBIS). Using the existing structure of the PBIS teams and the "zone" concept of categorizing kids (green, yellow and red zones representing the proportion of kids requiring different levels of prevention/intervention) as a starting point, the program will work to better integrate mental health systems into the PBIS structure for students with more intensive mental health needs (red and yellow zone kids). School Mental Health Integration Teams will build on and enhance the existing PBIS community teams by adding a stronger family engagement component.

Schools selected in each local school system will receive intensive training, resource sharing and technical assistance. The grant will focus on providing a continuum of mental health promotion, prevention, early intervention, treatment and crisis intervention in schools. It is designed to enhance the knowledge and skills related to making appropriate referrals and improving linkages among school teams, families, youth, health care providers and the community.

In addition, the grant establishes the Maryland School Mental Health Alliance (MSMHA). The MSMHA partners are charged with coordinating the project aims and overseeing the implementation of the grant, thereby

- Mental Hygiene
 Administration
- Department of Juvenile Services
- Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care
- Mental Health
 Association of
 Maryland
- Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's
 Mental Health
- The Governor's Office for Children

Links to National MSMHA Partners

- IDEA Partnership
- Center for School-Based Mental Health Programs
- Center for the
 Advancement of Mental
 Health Practices in
 Schools

benefiting students, family members and staff in schools throughout Maryland. It is hoped that this demonstration project will assist educators, school administrators, community leaders, legislators, government officials and advocates in improving training, practice and policy related to linking schools with mental health services.

Please visit the MSDE's website for more information on the Maryland School Mental Health Alliance at http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.

 Secretary Grasmick Announces the Creation of the Maryland School Mental Health Alliance



The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is excited to announce the creation of the Maryland School Mental Health Alliance and welcomes the opportunity to partner with

leaders in providing mental health for children. The Alliance partners include:

- Maryland State Department of Education
- University of Maryland's Center for School Mental Health Analysis and Action
- Johns Hopkins University's Center for Prevention and Early Intervention
- Mental Health Association of Maryland
- Mental Hygiene Administration/Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Maryland Department of Juvenile Services
- Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health
- Maryland Assembly of School-Based Health, and
- The Governor's Office for Children.

The Alliance is immediately charged with the implementation of the United States Department of Education's "Mental Health Integration" grant, of which Maryland was one of only 20 recipients. The grant will enable the MSDE to work with our partners to provide integrated mental health services to students who need them.

We'll begin by enhancing resources to fifteen schools in the State identified to participate in the project because of their outstanding efforts in developing the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program in their schools. PBIS is a collaborative initiative involving the Maryland State Department of Education, the Sheppard Pratt Health System and the Johns Hopkins University Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence. More than 380 schools have been trained in PBIS and report reduced office referrals and suspensions. We know that a safe, positive learning environment is key to a student's success. Maryland has taken great strides to provide training for schools involved in our PBIS initiative. We are excited to work with our partners to strengthen support for students identified with behavioral or mental health needs.

The link between a student's academic success and their mental, physical and emotional health is inextricable.

Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools

 Directors of Student Services Meet with the Maryland School Mental Health Alliance (MSMHA) Management Council

In early November, the MSMHA Management Council, co-led by Vicki Taliaferro and Milt McKenna from MSDE and Nancy Lever from the University of Maryland's Center for School Mental



Health Analysis and Action (CSMHA), met with the Directors of Student Services from Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, St. Mary's and Washington counties to discuss the next steps with the implementation of the Mental Health Integration grant. The selected counties have successfully implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in their school systems and have expressed an interest in integrating systems into

the PBIS structure for students with more intensive mental health needs.

The five counties selected to participate in the grant will be part of a cutting-edge demonstration project that integrates clinical research with current mental health practice in schools and will help impact policy for children's mental health services in Maryland and throughout the nation. Each county will receive funds to support activities to strengthen access for students and their families to mental health services in schools. The project will also focus on improving the quality of services by providing increased training and resources to further develop staff's ability to make appropriate mental health referrals, enhancing staff's mental health knowledge and basic skills, and expanding mental health system integration in PBIS schools. It is planned that the resources developed for this five county project will ultimately be shared throughout the state's school system, with the CSMHA taking the lead in evaluating the impact of this demonstration project.

The Directors of Student Services were asked to identify three schools (elementary, middle and high school) in their district that are interested in participating in this innovative project. School Mental Health Integration (SMHI) teams will be developed within the five local school systems, building on the existing PBIS teams with a proven track record of success. The SMHI teams will 1) communicate with local stakeholders about the efforts and resources of the MSMHA, 2) assess the needs of their local school system related to integrating schools and the larger mental health system and work to connect to these needs with identified resources, 3) provide support and guidance to district schools and school staff by connecting them with the MSMHA, and 4) collaborate with the MSMHA to provide intensive support, resources and training to targeted schools.

 Check-out the Maryland School Mental Health Alliance (MSMHA) Website!



The Maryland State Department of Education has developed a web site for the Maryland School Mental Health Alliance. The website allows for county school systems, community partners and state agencies involved in the implementation of the School Mental Health Integration demonstration project to easily share information, resources and

tools with school systems statewide and throughout the nation. The website also provides useful links to access more information on the MSMHA partnering organizations, as well as other state and national links focused on improving integration of mental health services in schools. Please access this resource at http://www.msmha.org

School Mental Health Integration Multi-Scale Learning System

The School Mental Health Integration project strives to build a multi-scale, school-community-county- state-national learning system so findings will be shared at all of these levels, making national and state knowledge and supports available for advancing the work in individual schools.

The five counties participating in the demonstration project will share lessons learned and results through statewide training events such as the PBIS Summer Institute, the School Health Interdisciplinary Program (SHIP) conference and the Mental Hygiene Administration's Blueprint for Children's Mental Health conference. Resources and findings will also be made available on the MSMHA website and through links to all partnering organization websites to the larger Maryland community.

In addition to state and local learning loops, the MSMHA will collaborate and share information and resources with key national partners. The IDEA Partnership of the Office

of Special Education and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education will provide guidance and support around developing effective training materials/ curriculum and conducting meaningful evaluations. The IDEA Partnership will share the findings from this demonstration project with its 11 seed grant states. Each IDEA Partnership seed grant state is working to develop improved family-school mental health and system collaboration. The Mental Health Education Integration Consortium (MHEDIC), a consortium of eight state universities focused on advancing the mental health training of educators and other school personnel, has agreed to provide guidance and consultation related to the development of materials and training for MSMHA. The Center for School-Based Mental Health Programs (CSBMHP) at Miami University in Ohio will also work with the MSMHA, sharing knowledge of best practice and resources that have been used in their state to advance the integration of mental health services in schools. Finally, the Missouri University Center for the Advancement of Mental Health Practices in Schools will collaborate with the MSMHA to help enhance Maryland's distance learning resources.

Maryland School Mental Health Alliance (MSMHA) Advisory Board

The MSMHA management council, who is charged with overseeing the implementation of the grant, will be guided by an advisory board containing diverse stakeholders from the five counties, including families, youth, school staff, mental health and health professionals, faith-based leaders, community leaders, advocates, government officials and researchers. The MSMHA Advisory Board will provide guidance related to the overall project design, materials and training development, and project implementation and evaluation. The advisory board will meet quarterly, beginning in January. Colleen O'Neil Yanchulis, a family member from Anne Arundel County, has agreed to chair this board.

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School Mental Health Integration Grant Family Partnership

The Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health (the Coalition) has been given the task of ensuring that families are included as equal partners in all aspects of the grant project. A family member identified by the Coalition, Colleen O'Neill Yanchulis, has been appointed as the chair of the Advisory Board for the project. Susan Tager, Coalition Family Liaison, is a member of the Management Council for the grant. The Family Liaison will develop training materials for families and ensure that all materials are sensitive to the diverse needs of families.

In each of the five counties receiving the mental health training and integration enhancements, family members will be hired as Family Partners to bring their unique perspective to the county wide integration team meetings. In each county, at least one family member, and as many as three, will attend the monthly meetings, representing the families of the children in the schools receiving the services of this grant.

The Family Partners will be trained and supported by the Coalition. They will be brought together for a daylong workshop, so that they will be familiar with the goals of the grant and PBIS and will fully understand the expectations of their role.

The Family Partners will receive a small stipend for their attendance at the monthly meetings, and for any other related work they might do for the integration team. They will participate in monthly conference calls, with the Family Liaison. The Family Partners will be given the opportunity to attend workshops and trainings that are determined to be of benefit to them as members of the integration teams. The Family Liaison will be available to support them in their role, as necessary.

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